

Butterfly Symmetry

Description:

Children will learn about symmetry, balance, and color mixing, and how they can be applied to their artwork.

Materials:

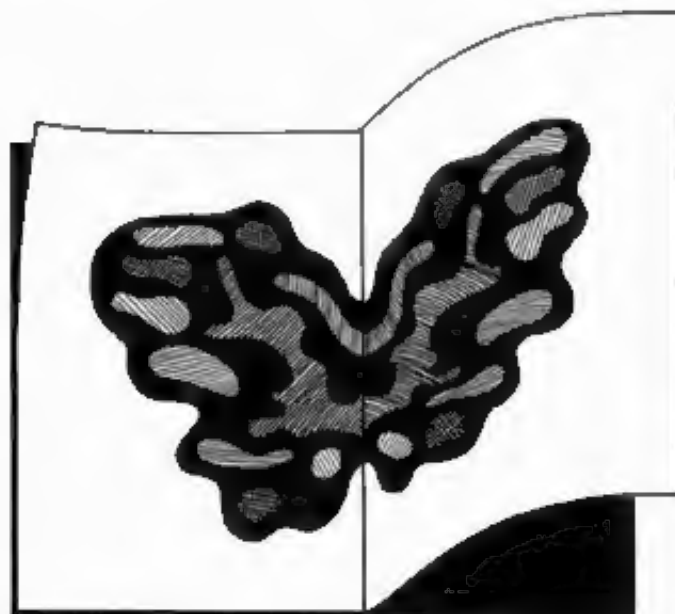
white paper; red, yellow, and blue paint; paintbrushes; water and containers; magic markers or crayons

Optional: safety scissors, construction paper, glue

Standards: 2

Concepts: Balance, pattern, and color

Level: Grades K-3



Procedure:

Have your child fold a sheet of white paper in half and open it up so it lies flat. Using a paintbrush and a primary color, he puts a big blob of paint on one half of the paper next to, but not touching, the fold line. Then he cleans his brush in water and puts a big blob of another primary color on the other half of the paper. Working quickly so the paint doesn't dry, he folds up the paper and rubs it with the palm of his hand so the two colors blot together. When he opens the paper, there will be a symmetrical butterfly pattern just waiting to be embellished with magic marker antennae. The two primary colors will have mixed in some areas to form a secondary color. If you wish, you can cut out the butterfly pattern and glue it on a piece of construction paper.

Extension:

Make a butterfly mobile! Make butterflies of different sizes, tape string of different lengths to the top of each butterfly, and tie the butterflies to a coat hanger. Then hang the mobile from a ceiling light, window, or ceiling hook.

Ask what your child sees in the paint blots. Maybe a spider, a tree, or even a face will start to appear as you both take a close look.

Tips:

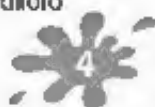
Thick paint works best for this activity, but watercolors will do in a pinch. As a rule, the thicker the paint (e.g., acrylic or tempera), the thicker the paper should be. The thinner the paint (e.g., watercolor), the thinner the paper should be (e.g., typing paper). You can thicken tempera paint by adding a touch of white glue or flour.

Just for Kids:

An object is symmetrical when one half matches the other. Try this: Look in a mirror and hold a piece of paper in front of one half of your face. Then, move the paper to cover the other half of your face. You will see that one side matches the other. Try the same thing with other objects. Hold a piece of paper up against a cup or a shoe, then move the paper to see if the sides match. Find as many symmetrical objects as you can. Be sure to look for symmetries in nature, such as flowers, butterflies, and beetles. Now let's make a symmetrical picture of a butterfly.

Resource:

The Butterfly Alphabet Book by Brian Cassie and Jerry Pallota



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